DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 404 884 FL 024 461

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TITLE Binational Teacher Development: Teacher Ambassador Exchange Program, New Mexico, USA and Nuevo Leon, Mexico.
PUB DATE Feb 97
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for Bilingual Education (Albuquerque, NM, February 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; Cultural Awareness; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Higher Education; International Cooperation; International Educational Exchange; International Programs; Literacy Education; *Multicultural Education; Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation; Spanish Speaking; State Programs; *Teacher Education; *Teacher Exchange Programs
IDENTIFIERS *Mexico (Nuevo Leon)

ABSTRACT

The report describes the rationale for and history of an exchange program for Nuevo Leon (Mexico) and New Mexico bilingual education teachers. The program evolved from the need to help Spanish-speaking students maintain their own language and culture while in the United States. New Mexico's state policy concerning language-minority children and second language learning is traced from the first bilingual education policy statement in 1968 to standards for bilingual education and second language skills set in 1996. The general design of state-mandated bilingual multicultural education programs is also outlined. Policy developments emerging from an October 1991 border conference organized by the U.S. and Mexican departments of education are chronicled through the implementation of the second teacher exchange program in 1996. The exchange itself involves an orientation, teacher preparation of three mini-workshops (comments on home community and students, strategies for teaching English as a Second Language, and the New Mexico educational system) to be presented to their Mexican colleagues, and a paired exchange in which 12 New Mexico teachers and their Mexican teacher-partners live in each other's home and teach together for 2-week periods. Teacher responses to the program are summarized, and support materials are appended. (MSE)

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ED 404 884

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
FEB. 7, 1997

BINATIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT: TEACHER AMBASSADOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM NEW MEXICO, USA AND NUEVO LEON, MEXICO

NEW MEXICO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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FL024491

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RATIONALE

As the world of the 21st century approaches rapidly carrying with it greater global interdependence, it becomes incumbent upon our institutions to craft a vision for society. As we approach this new place in time, it becomes important to recognize that the term society may not be restricted to the confines of the political boundaries established between countries. Rather, society may be viewed in an expansive way, encompassing humankind.

It is the nature of humankind to advance itself in terms of its material, cultural, and intellectual resources. While our countries have distinct ideologies and systems to manage these resources, we have long known that our education institutions provide the mechanism to bring about this advancement.

The nation's growing international interests in the area of trade and commerce elaborated in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), urge a recognition of the important role education plays for bilateral success in related areas. The memorandum of understanding between the education agencies of Mexico and the United States encourage and facilitate relationships that emphasize exchanges and dialogue centered on educational management, methods, evaluation, and research. Emphasis in the agreement is on bilateral initiatives and programs, and the study and teaching of each other's language, culture, and history through the development of exchanges and cooperative activities.

The public schools of the State of New Mexico enroll a student population where approximately 47% are Hispanic, 10% are Native American, and 1% are Asian, 2% are African American and 40% are Anglo American. We are the most linguistically and culturally diverse state in the United States where Spanish, English, and seven Native American languages are spoken in the communities served by the public schools. The New Mexico State Board of Education has always provided leadership in matters of teaching English since many students must learn it as their second language, and also in assuring that the schools use the language of the home for instruction in the public schools.

Maintenance and expansion of the languages and cultures of the children whose ancestral heritage is not English is a human right which the schools should honor in the process of education. Additionally, instruction in the mother tongue with sound development of the English language gives the child opportunities for success in learning and success in acquiring proficiency in English, the national language. In every corner of the world bilingualism is recognized as a sign of a well-educated individual, an individual who can function in two linguistic and cultural frameworks.

POLICY

The New Mexico State Board of Education, the legislature, and the people of the state have always held the view that bilingualism is a valuable and worthwhile intellectual avenue for the children in the state. New Mexico is perhaps the only state in the nation which has made constitutional provisions for maintenance of a bilingual citizenry. Recognizing that in every corner of the world bilingualism is a necessary and desirable attribute of well-educated individuals, the New Mexico State Board of Education has established a goal for competence in two languages for the students of the state by the year two thousand.

In a state such as New Mexico with its large Hispanic and Indian populations, policymakers, legislators, educators, and the people of the state have long recognized that bilingual instruction is a viable, strong, and positive force for the education of children whose mother tongue is other than English. The fact that a child may speak another language should never impair the dignity of the child nor the child's right to receive the services provided by the public schools.

The New Mexico State Board of Education has historically shown by its policies and actions that the education of language-different children is a priority. It has taken a leadership role in these matters as shown by the following actions:

1968	**First policy statement in support of bilingual instruction**
1968	**First official certification requirements for teaching English as a second language, and first state in the nation with ESL certification**
1976	**Official state guidelines for bilingual education were issued by the state agency**
1979	**First official certification criteria for bilingual education**
1987	**Certification criteria adopted for the Navajo language**

1990 **Consolidating Initiatives for Tomorrow's Education (CITE) policy document sets and initiative for competence in two languages for all students in New Mexico schools.**

1996 **State Board regulation establishes expectations for student success to include competence in at least one language in addition to English.**

1996 **New Mexico Content Standards with Benchmarks for subject areas support the use of a student's primary or home language for teaching and learning while the student acquires proficiency in English language other than English or concept development.**

BILINGUAL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

In 1973, the New Mexico legislature passed the present law for Bilingual Multicultural Education. The main purpose is to insure equal education opportunities for students in New Mexico. It also provides opportunities for students to expand their conceptual and linguistic potentials and abilities, and learn to appreciate the value and beauty of different languages and cultures.

By providing funding to the schools for bilingual education, this law supports the view held by the framers of our Constitution that it is healthy, intellectually, culturally, and linguistically, to be bilingual. It also sends an important message that the schools have the special responsibility to develop English language skills and concepts for students who cannot be taught through that language so that as soon as possible they can learn through that medium.

This translates into program of instruction where there is:

- **A defined program for English language development where all the skills of the English language are taught using specialized methods and materials for second language learners.**

- **Instruction in math, science, social studies, fine arts in the language of strength of the child or through a combination of English and the home language. This element prevents intellectual retardation because the concepts take on meaning when taught in the language students control best.**

- **Instruction in the cultures of New Mexico through the social studies and/or fine arts taught in English and/or the home language.**

- **Development of literacy skills in the home language where the language is written.**

The program provides for the progressive educational development of students so that content is not taught twice (once in each language) and that the local curriculum sequence is followed. The concept is to prepare instruction for students at the appropriate level, knowing that language serves as the vehicle for learning concepts in the schools. Since the basic purpose of all instruction is to provide students with skills and concepts, bilingual programs must also be designed for this purpose.

The law specifies that bilingual programs be established to meet educational and linguistic needs of students. Therefore, priority is given to students so identified, and the instructional program is directed toward their needs. As such, bilingual instruction should be designed primarily for non-English speakers, partial speakers, and bilingual students who are falling behind in achievement or show a marked deficiency in basic skills. For students who are succeeding in the schools, a program of enrichment may be provided. The New Mexico State Department of Education recommends that districts identify need using interviews about the language of the home, oral proficiency measures, and tests of academic achievement.

HISTORY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

October, 1991 — **US-MEXICO BORDER CONFERENCE**

In the fall of 1991, the US Department of Education and *la Secretaría de Educación de México* sponsored the first ever US-Mexico Border Conference. The memorandum between our governments emphasized the important role education plays for bilateral success in trade, commerce, and general economic development. This agreement encouraged and facilitated bilateral relationships between state education agencies, universities, and the public schools for the purpose of encouraging mutually beneficial educational activities. Two key areas of emphasis of the memorandum are:

1. **Cooperation that facilitates exchanges and dialogue centered on educational management, methods, evaluation, and research.**

2. **In support of other bilateral initiatives and programs, the study and teaching of each other's language, culture, and history through the development of exchanges and cooperative activities.**

December, 1992 — **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION ON BORDER ISSUES**

The New Mexico State Board of Education adopted a resolution requesting the state's congressional delegation, representatives from the Governor's office and other appropriate officials work collaboratively with the Mexican government to develop agreements and policies regarding border development which will have an impact on education.

January, 1993 — **HOUSE MEMORIALS 3, 5, 63**

These memorials urged national leaders to support funding health and education issues to states in the US-Mexico Border region.

February, 1993

GOVERNOR'S BORDER CONFERENCE, MONTERREY, NUEVO LEON, MEXICO

State Board of Education members met with education officials from Mexico and jointly propose official ties between education agencies of Nuevo Leon and New Mexico. These encompassed teacher exchanges and various collaborative efforts in the areas of research into elementary and secondary education, reciprocity for teacher certification, joint professional development activities, and technology.

October, 1993

JOINT MEETING ON BORDER ISSUES: TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Policymakers crafted a resolution that addressed common issues pertaining to the education of students in the border region.

January, 1994

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: NUEVO LEON AND NEW MEXICO

The signed memorandum of understanding delineates activities and projects of mutual cooperation in communication, technology, instruction, teacher preparation, and research.

January, 1994

LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATION FOR TEACHER EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The Legislature appropriated $50,000 "to implement binational education cooperative programs between the New Mexico state board of education and the Republic of Mexico."

October, 1994

MEETING WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS FROM NUEVO LEON

A meeting between the Undersecretary for Academic and Research Development of the State of Nuevo León, the Consulate of Mexico, and officials from the Department of Education and the Governor's office was held in Santa Fe to collaboratively elaborate objectives and necessary actions for a teacher exchange as well as other interactions to realize the intent of the memorandum.

April-May, 1995

TEACHER AMBASSADOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM CARRIED OUT

A total of nine elementary and middle school teachers from New Mexico and nine teachers from the state of Nuevo León pilot a paired exchange.

August, 1995

STATE BOARD APPROVES FUNDING TO CONTINUE PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

New Mexico State Department of Education and the Southwest Education Development Laboratories (SEDL) collaboratively developed a plan to continue the teacher exchange and conduct an evaluation of its impact.

March-April, 1996

SECOND TEACHER AMBASSADOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM CARRIED OUT

Twelve elementary teachers from the states of Nuevo León and New Mexico participate in teaching activities in each others classrooms and various workshops for the duration of the exchange.

CONTENT

The purpose of the program was to promote bilateral education and cultural cooperation among the educational institutions and between the state education agencies of both countries. The objectives were as follows:

- **Develop understanding about the education systems of the United States/Mexico**
- **Promote closer international education ties among teachers, schools districts, and state education agencies**
- **Promote understanding and good will among professionals involved in the education of children on both sides of the border**
- **Share methodology, instructional materials and models of dual language instruction**
- **Provide workshops and co-teach in a classroom setting.**

Teachers from the state of New Mexico were selected based in a criteria that considered their professional preparation and expertise in bilingual education and ESL, teaching experience, proficiency in Spanish, interest in expanding their knowledge base, and commitment to the objectives of the program.

Approximately one week before participating the in exchange, selected teachers attended a mandatory orientation to outline the expectations of the Board and the Department regarding their duties and roles as "Teacher Ambassadors" for the United States and for New Mexico. The Consul of Mexico provided general information about the country, the people, and their educational system. They also received resource materials for ESL and bilingual education and heard from last year's teachers who were involved in the exchange.

Each teacher was to prepare three mini-workshops for their colleagues from the receiving school in Mexico. They were as follows:

- ***Mi familia, mi pueblo, mi estado y mis estudiantes*** **(My family, my village, my state and my students)**
- ***Estrategias para la enseñanza de inglés como segundo idioma*** **(Strategies for teaching English as a second language)**
- ***El sistema educativo americano en Nuevo México*** **(The American educational system in New Mexico)**

Teachers participated in a "paired" exchange with Nuevo Leon: New Mexico's teachers lived in the homes of their teacher-partner from Mexico and shared their teaching experience for two weeks. Their teacher-partner from Mexico then returned to live in the home of their New Mexico counterpart and shared classroom teaching experiences at the local level.

EVALUATION

Each year, the New Mexico Department of Education conducted a written evaluation of the program teachers' experiences to formulate recommendations for future experiences. During the first exchange, the Department conducted an oral interview with all the teachers to receive their input on the value of the experience for their current teaching assignments. Last August, the Southwest Education Development Laboratories conducted a video taped interview of the teachers and is in the process of finalizing that evaluation.

Thus, the teachers provided written and oral anecdotal information about the quality and professional value of the teacher ambassador exchange experience. Their comments fell into the following categories:

⇒ **It gave teachers a first-hand teaching experience in a classroom setting while living in a foreign country.**

- "I was able to live the experience. I saw first-hand the conditions of the schools and how the teachers teach".
- "Wonderful hands-on familiarity with the national curriculum, varying physical settings and materials in Monterrey area schools. Most surprising aspect was the amazing similarity of student populations; kids of Nuevo Leon and New Mexico have a lot in common!"
- "At the elementary school I worked in, the physical conditions were very poor; however, through civics education they develop a great sense of pride and honor and seem to be very happy. In the secondary school I worked in the teachers were very well prepared and highly organized. Students worked hard and were advanced in their studies. The physical conditions were also poor, but again students exhibited pried in themselves and their work."
- "The students really want to learn. They were really interested in learning about the United States, the students here, and the English language. They have so much respect. Teachers are very respected."
- "In the first grade class, the environment is very structured. Lessons are teacher directed and teacher guided. Lessons are for the whole class, not individualized. In the forth, fifth, and sixth grade ESL classes, they have cooperative groups, student directed learning. The lessons are whole group and also individualized."

⇒ **Teachers gained a broader understanding of Mexico's educational system as well as that of New Mexico which impacted upon their understanding of their own students academic background.**

- "The schools of Nuevo Leon are less directed by the district and more by the State. In New Mexico, the schools are more site base managed. "
- "Both Nuevo Leon and New Mexico are progressive entities within respective countries; both have strong commitment to bilingual education, and both states are sensitive towards the trends of change due to recent NAFTA agreements."
- "There are vast differences in scheduling, discipline and their employment of teachers"
- "The program has been extremely beneficial to me professionally because I was able to get a close, in-depth look at educational system of recent immigrants from Mexico. I have been able to provide better information for my co-workers and administrators regarding education in Mexico."
- "Students are taught with limited materials both in texts and classroom facilities. Yet, students have great respect for their teachers and their teachers' efforts at education them. Teachers in Mexico receive little pay for their teaching efforts, yet, the Mexican society in general seems to admire them and, therefor, this is one to the teachers' rewards."
- "There were more similarities than differences. Therefore, we need to concentrate and communicate on what is shared so that we can created a common basis of expectancies to facilitate cross border work sessions. This will ensure that student's education does not suffer in crossing, due to both sides thinking we are too different."
- "I have developed a deep respect for the teachers in Mexico and appreciate, as well, all of the materials, technology, and financial benefits we enjoy in the United States."

⇒ **It created a sense of collegiality among teachers on both sides of the border.**

- "I have learned that schools in Mexico are faced with many of the same problems in education that we are faced with in the United States. However, schools in Mexico frequently require creativity and resourcefulness far beyond schools in the United States."
- "We come from very diverse backgrounds, all trying to teach another language, and constantly trying to explore new approaches and possibilities. All the teachers from New Mexico are adventurous souls who wish to perfect the first or second language by seeking many avenues to speak, live, and learn the language in a real, live and everyday life living situation."
- "Strong individuality is common due to the fact that New Mexico is so different from one place to the next. The caliber of the New Mexico bilingual teacher is high. Most have an adequate background thorough professional experience and personal travel to contribute well to the exchange program."
- "I have learned there is a strong body of support for the advancement of bilingual education in the State of New Mexico. There are quite a few caring, sensitive

individuals who are ensuring quality and respect for the students in bilingual education."

⇒ **By living with a family, teachers had personalized knowledge of the culture of Mexico.**

- "Mexico is still very traditional. Most families are still together. In all but one of the 30 students interviewed were there a father, mother and other family members in the household. The people of Monterrey that I met worked very long hours and days. Not just the teachers but the homemakers too."
- "We all certainly did learn everyday life in Monterrey in very generous homes from our hosts. it was an experience that I would do again and will never forget."
- "I gained a brother in coming to meet Mr. José Guadalupe Morales. I still feel the human warmth as he and his dad said farewell in Monterrey (a scene that would be repeated in month later in Albuquerque.) We all had tears in our eyes. --*¡Y los meros machos no se suponen llorar!"*
- "I learned so much about the system of education, the family unit, and social structure in Mexico. Since I teach Mexican immigrant students, I have a better idea of where they and their parents are coming from. In addition, I can share this information with other staff in our building."

⇒ **Many new ideas, materials were shared through open and direct communication on site.**

- "It has opened a whole community of people in Monterrey to correspond with, thereby sharing ideas, materials and most all our homes and friendship for continued personal and language growth, just to mention a few."
- "It has shown me that students are eager to learn and can be motivated to learn without the extra "supplies and materials" that we think are necessary. I have gained a better understanding of my students who came from Mexico."
- "My exchange partner-teacher happened to be teaching the same topic in Math as I was. She showed my students the Mexican method for division and my students really related to their division problems without hesitation. In addition, my other bilingual children made me aware, that is, how their parents were showing them at home as they tried to help my students with their homework. Now, I will definitely teach division using both strategies."

⇒ **Teachers affirmed and further developed great respect for language and culture.**

- "It taught me how important it is for teachers to increase their capacity in Spanish by pursuing the language at a higher level."
- "Professionally, it helped my Spanish skills--interpreting, speaking, writing."
- "It helped update familiarity with the Mexican society (politics, social tends, etc.) This allows you to help draw out new arrival students from Mexico"
- "The chance to return to Mexican schools and experience the special *calor humano a la mexicana* will never be forgotten."
- "All in all, we love and cherish our culture and 'going back' is a feeling that many Hispanics here in New Mexico have with Mexico. It definitely is a shared culture, and we all enjoyed the opportunity to do just that--share."

⇒ **Teachers indicated the experience created a renewed value for languages.**

- "One of my monolingual Spanish speaking students who had been struggling to learn English since his arrival in New Mexico six months earlier wanted to know how Hector (the Mexican teacher) learned to speak English so quickly since he had just arrived in NM three days earlier."
- "It showed me that I'm very lucky to know two languages. It is something that younger generations should learn and experience as well."
- "It gave me the opportunity to 'reacquire' my first language, Spanish, without fear of making mistakes. The affective filter was lowered giving me the comfort level needed to communicate broadly in the language. It validated the importance of the home language in New Mexico."
- "I acquired more knowledge of the Spanish language."
- "My experience in Monterrey will, I believe be of great benefit to me professionally. First of all, it has broadened my understanding of what bilingual teaching is all about and increased my desire to pursue my own education in this area. It has given me personal contacts which I hope in the future will enable me to teach for an extended period, either in Mexico or in another Spanish speaking country. Finally, my own Spanish has taken a leap forward and I have renewed sense of self confidence in my ability to communicate in the language."

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TEACHER AMBASSADOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM

NEW MEXICO-NUEVO LEON

1996

The New Mexico Department of Education has established official ties with the state education agencies of Nuevo León, Mexico through a memorandum of understanding. It delineates activities and projects of mutual cooperation in communication, technology, instruction, teacher preparation, and research. A common economic market between our countries affirms the need for a common academic market.

The 1994 Legislature appropriated funds to support these activities and projects. One significant result is the Teacher-Ambassador Exchange Program which was carried out during the months of April and May 1995. Twelve teachers from New Mexico will participate in the program, this year as delineated in the following objectives:

1. ***Develop understanding about the education systems of the United States/México.***

2. ***Promote closer international education ties among teachers, schools, districts, and state education agencies.***

3. ***Promote understanding and good will among professionals involved in the education of children on both sides of the border.***

4. ***Share methodology, instructional materials and models of dual language instruction.***

5. ***Provide workshops and co-teach in a classroom setting.***

PROGRAMA de INTERCAMBIO
Maestro(a) - Embajador(a)
el 11 de marzo de 1996
Edificio Estatal del Departamento de Educación
Salón G12-A
300 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, New Mexico

A G E N D A

I. **Bienvenidos**
   a. **Albert Zamora - Director de la División de Servicios de Aprendizaje**
   b. **Emma Lou Rodríguez - Miembra de la Mesa Directiva Educativa**
   c. **Eleanor Ortiz - Presidente de la Mesa Directiva Educativa**

II. **Repaso Histórico y Antecedentes:**
   a. **Reunión en Monterrey (1992) - Emma Lou Rodríguez**
   b. **Programa de Intercambio Maestro(a)-Embajador(a) - Walter Archuleta**
   c. **Dos Maestras - Embajadoras Anteriores**
      1. **María Zambrano- Farmington Municipal Schools**
      2. **Esta Diamond Gutiérrez - Española Municipal Schools**

III. **Información General sobre México - Carlos González, Cónsul de México**

D E S C A N S O - Procesar las visas

IV. **Repaso de actividades para el programa de intercambio maestro(a)-embajador(a)**
   a. **Observar, compartir ideas, participar en la instrucción de clases y compartir materiales de instrucción**
   b. **Impartir clases de inglés como segunda lengua**
   c. **Convivir en México con su colega de equipo**
   d. **Proveer tres (3) mini talleres (de una hora) en español a los maestros(as) en la escuela asignada:**
      1. **Mi familia/mi pueblo/mi estado y mis estudiantes**
      2. **Estrategias para la enseñanza de inglés como segunda lengua**
      3. **El sistema educativo americano en Nuevo México**
   e. **Su rol al regresar de México y el rol del maestro(a) de México:**
      1. **Proveer alojamiento al maestro(a) de México**
      2. **El maestro(a) de México va a proveer instrucción en español en las artes de la lengua**
      3. **El maestro(a) va a proveer tres (3) mini talleres en español en tópicos escogidos a toda la escuela**
   f. **Preguntas - Respuestas**

V. **Agentes de Viaje de Río Grande Travel**

VI. **L E V A N T A M I E N T O (Aplazamiento)**

N.M., Mexico Teachers Learn by Trading Places

■ *Exchange program gives appreciation for different systems, improves foreign language skills*

By Andrea Schoellkopf
Journal Staff Writer

PERALTA — The adoring hugs and kisses from a 5-year-old used to make bilingual teacher Janelle Taylor-Ray uneasy. It's dangerous to get too friendly with students these days, she's been told.

But after spending two weeks teaching in Monterrey, Mexico, Taylor-Ray now understands.

"That's what they do over there. That was a normal thing," she said. "I wish I would have known that was normal when that kindergartner wanted to hug me."

The lessons of that visit, sponsored by a teacher-exchange program, also help her relate to 10 of her own students here at Peralta Elementary School whose families come from Mexico, she said.

"We get so many students here from Mexico, and we don't know how to teach them," Taylor-Ray said. "They have a lot more respect (for teachers). And they're not used to not wearing uniforms."

The differences between the two nations' schools are obvious, said both Taylor-Ray and her Mexican counterpart, Blanca Valdés del Bosque, who is living and teaching with Taylor-Ray for two weeks.

Pictures of Valdés del Bosque's public middle school show students in uniform with clean faces and no makeup.

Teachers move from classroom to classroom, so the rooms are bare. Classes can reach up to 47 students who attend either morning or afternoon sessions to ease overcrowding.

Valdés del Bosque, who has taught middle school Spanish for 23 years, said she was awed by the surroundings in a typical Peralta classroom — the furry pets such as hamsters and bunnies, the student artwork hanging from the ceiling and walls, the papers and teaching aids on display.

"Here they have everything," she said. "It's a lot stricter (in Mexico)."

She'll be taking back boxes of books for the school library, which is sparse compared with those in U.S. schools, and new songs and lesson plans.

Boys and girls often attend schools separately, Valdés del Bosque said while talking to a class about schools in Monterrey.

"That's cool!" exclaimed one boy.

There are no janitors, so families take turns cleaning up the building. Mothers meet with teachers at the school every two months to discuss their children.

"In Mexico, teachers are a very important part of the community," Valdés del Bosque said. "We are trying to teach them not just subjects. We try to teach them values so they can be good citizens."

Taylor-Ray added, "Everything we're trying to get back to here: family and religion."

During Taylor-Ray's visit to Mexico last month, she helped English teachers there with their classes and critiqued English presentations at the local university.

"There's no songs, lots of sentences and lots of vocabulary," said Taylor-Ray, 25, who also improved her Spanish in the visit.

Valdés del Bosque was among the 12 best English speakers from the state of Nuevo Leon applying for the year-old exchange program. She last went on exchange to the United States when she was a 14-year-old high school student. Now, at 50, she's back as a teacher.

The exchange program is the result of a border governors' conference in 1993, when education officials from New Mexico and Nuevo Leon met to exchange ideas.

Now they're exchanging teachers, said Mary Jean Habermann, director of the bilingual and multicultural education unit with the state Department of Education.

Twelve bilingual education teachers from New Mexico are chosen each year for the exchange that's funded by the state and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

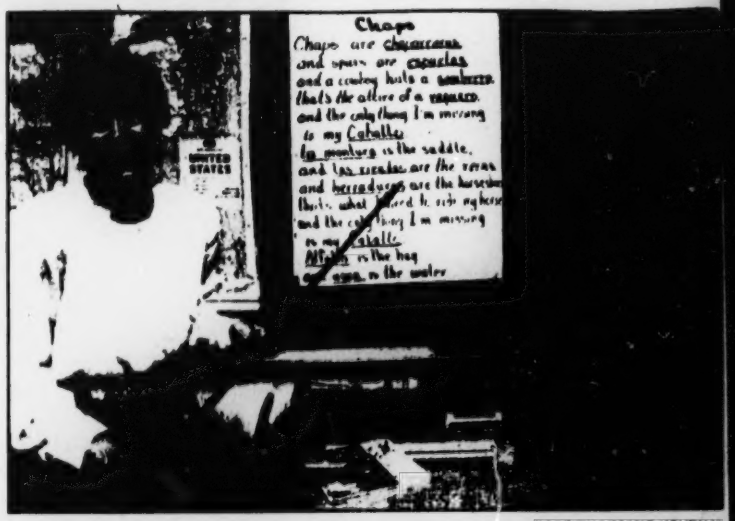
"The objective of the teacher-exchange program is to have our teachers develop understanding about the education systems in both states to promote some closer international ties between teachers, schools and education agencies," Habermann said.

Since the governors' conference, elementary schools in Nuevo Leon have implemented English lessons so students are better prepared for upper grades, Valdés del Bosque said.

Last year's New Mexico participants have said they can understand the actions of the immigrant families better.

New Mexican teachers have also learned the Mexican methods of learning mathematics, which they say is easier for some students to grasp.

While the state doesn't keep track of immigrant enrollment, there were 83,350 students enrolled in bilingual programs in New Mexico this year, Habermann said.


Chaps
Chaps are chaparreras
and spurs are espuelas
and a cowboy hats a sombrero
that's the attire of a vaquero
and the only thing I'm missing
is my Caballo
La montura is the saddle,
and las riendas are the reins
and herraduras are the horseshoes
that's what I need to ride my horse
and the only thing I'm missing
is my caballo
Alfalfa is the hay
agua is the water

ROSE PALMISANO/JOURNAL

BILINGUAL DUET: Blanca Valdés del Bosque, left, and Janelle Taylor-Ray share singalong duties at Peralta Elementary. As participants in a program that sends U.S. teachers to Mexico and brings Mexican teachers here, both also share the experience of getting to know the other nation's students and teaching methods.

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Trading Places

Add teachers to the list of goods traded across the U.S.-Mexico border.

Teachers like Peralta Elementary School's Janelle Taylor-Ray and Blanca Valdés del Bosque of Monterrey, Mexico, are trading places.

In the process, each is getting cross-pollinated in the other's culture, language and educational practices. The experience has already been fruitful for Taylor-Ray, who says she is better able to understand the cultural background of her students who have emigrated from Mexico.

She spent two weeks in Monterrey, teaching students, working with teachers of English and becoming even more fluent in Spanish. Taylor-Ray's host, Valdés del Bosque. a Spanish teacher, is now her guest at home and in the classroom.

The program, kicked off in the state of New Mexico and the *estado del Nuevo Leon* in 1993, is a natural for educators. When it comes to their job, helping students overcome obstacles to learning whether they are disabilities, behavioral problems or cultural barriers, teachers all speak the same language.

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